



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

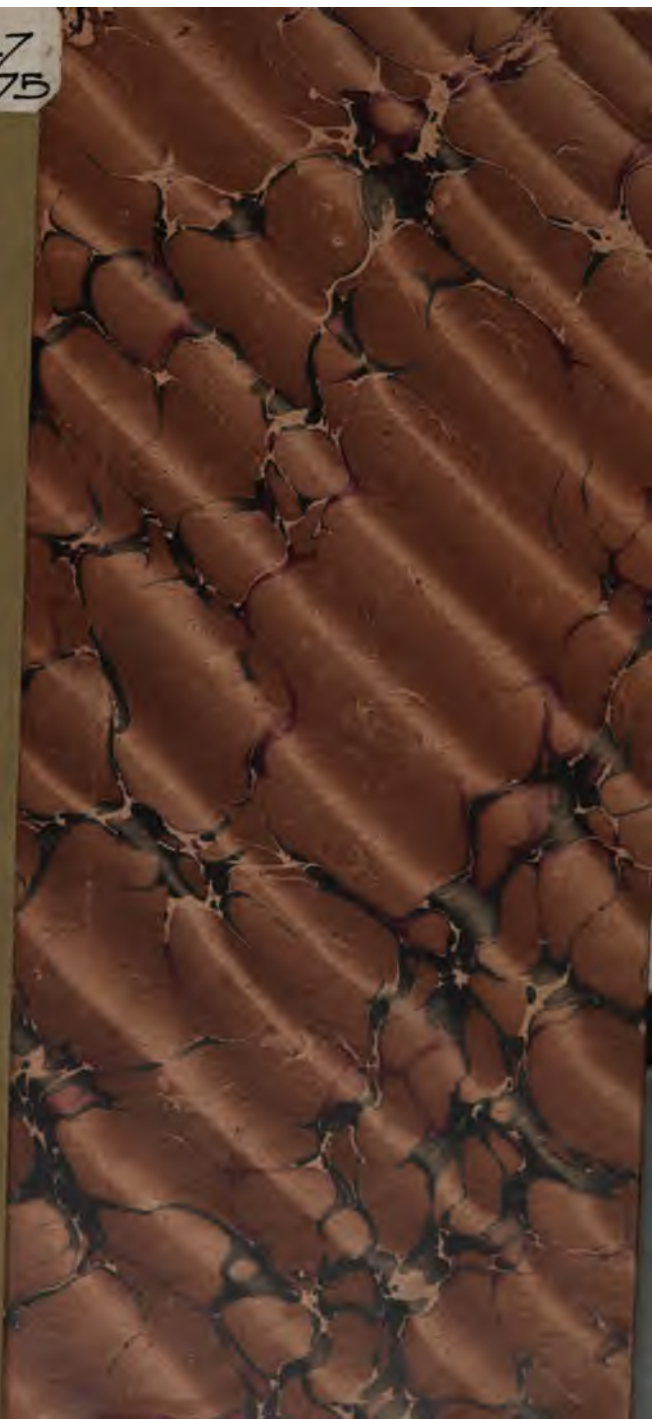
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Smith - The Infidel Reclaimed - 1832

8347
270.75



C 8347, 970.75

Harvard College
Library



By Exchange

9.
24.
0

Lot 12 Series 2.

THE



INFIDEL RECLAIMED;

BEING AN

EXTRAORDINARY INSTANCE

**OF THE GOODNESS AND THE POWER OF OMNIPOTENCE,
TO ONE OF HIS BENIGHTED CHILDREN,**

RELATED BY

FREDERICK SMITH,

A MINISTER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS, IN LONDON,

IN A LETTER TO

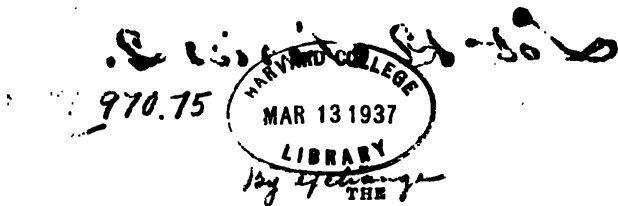
JOHN MURRAY, OF NEW-YORK.

*Printed for the Trustees of Obadiah Brown's Benevolent
Fund.*

PROVIDENCE:

H. H. BROWN.....PRINTER.

1832.



INFIDEL RECLAIMED.



I BECAME acquainted with a native of Ireland, his name Francis Nugent, who, in his early youth, went to Germany, where he was educated at one of the Colleges there; and was brought up in the Roman Catholic persuasion; the inconsistency of which, he told me, he very early saw. The bigotry, superstition and wickedness of the priests, was such as to give him a disgust to religion; believing, he said, that the foundation of it was dissimulation and priestcraft.

When he left the University, he was introduced to the Emperor Joseph the second, to whom he was one of the lords of the bed-chamber; and he became an officer of rank in the German army; a part of which he commanded in a war against the Turks. The Emperor made him a Count, in addition to his hereditary titles of Marquis and Viscount of Valadesto, in Spain: he was also a grandee of the first order in that kingdom; besides which he was related to some of the greatest nobility in England and Ireland.

At the commencement of our first acquaintance, he expressed a wish to know something of the principles of Friends; and having read Barclay's Apology, on returning it, he told me, it was the best written book on divinity he had ever seen; and if it were possible to act according to the sentiments contained in it, no man could act wrong; but, he added, I have something to say to you in private, and which I hardly dare to say to any other man. Unfortunately for me, I do not believe in any system of religion: I do not even believe in the existence of a God. You may be assured it is a subject that has given me a great deal of thought, and when I came into this protestant country, I had hoped I should have discovered the essence of truth; and that the protestant clergy would have given the lie to the impressions I had imbibed, from my early prejudices on account of the dissolute and abandoned lives of the Romish clergy.—But, alas! I perceive there is the same system of deception carried on in England, as in Germany; the Clergy have only one thing in view; and that is the accumulation of wealth, and where it can be done, to endeavor after splendor and aggrandizement. As to their flocks, it is a matter of no consequence to

them, whether they are wise or ignorant; it appears no part of their study to aim at religious improvement; so that I find myself just where I was. I find that all mankind are alike; they pretend to religion, and that is all; they talk of it and there they leave it. As a confirmation of what I say, I may inform you, that on my first coming into these parts, I paid a visit to my relations in Ireland, who shewed me great hospitality and kindness, and, as is usual in that country, there were large convivial parties, where neither the manners, nor the conversation, would bear much reflection, even in an infidel, as I supposed I should be called.

It happened one evening, that the conversation took a religious turn, in the course of which I inadvertently leaned towards scepticism, at least; on which one of the company hastily said, "Surely, Sir, you do not doubt the existence of a Supreme Being?" to which I replied, "What are your sentiments on that subject?" "Why, Sir, my sentiments are these; I look upon the Almighty as of infinite purity; as the object of both love and fear; that I am in his immediate presence; that it is through him I live and move and have my being; I consider that I am amenable to him for every ac-

tion of my life ; that if I do evil voluntarily, I run the hazard of his eternal displeasure, and wretchedness will be my portion ; but if I act according to his will, I shall be eternally happy." " Is this, Sir, really and truly your belief?" " Yes, Sir, it undoubtedly is, and is also the belief of every well-regulated Christian."

" Then, Sir, how comes it to pass, that your actions correspond so little with your professions? Is it possible that such a hearsay evidence as this, would convince me, were I an atheist, of the truth of God's existence? Has any part of your conduct, since we have been so often together, manifested either love or fear, or reverence for this object of your pretended regard? I wish not to give you offence, but see, whether there is any thing like consistency in your declarations and in the conduct I am led to fear you are in the habitual practice of?" My friend seemed confused and thoughtful, and I immediately turned the discourse to another subject.

I was much struck with so much of this conversation, and was considerably more so when he told me in confidence, that he had left Germany on account of his objections to serving any longer in the army; that the thoughts of taking away the life of a fellow

man, had become distressing and perplexing to him; so much so that he could in no way become accessory to the death of a fellow creature.

I felt much interested for this person, and carefully concealed from every one, what his sentiments were. I apprehended, where there appeared so much sincerity, the Almighty would in his own time reveal himself to him.

He seemed much gratified in attending our religious meetings, and I have many times seen him much affected and in tears in them. He used frequently in a modest way, to argue the point of his disbelief with me, but never I believe, as to himself, to much purpose.—I lent him several books where the existence of a God was treated on, but all seemed unavailing. He had made notes in a Bible I had lent him, almost throughout the whole book, in opposition to its precepts and doctrine, and towards the close of the period of his infidelity, he requested I would lend him Newton's Principia, which I refused, on the belief that he had wandered so much in the dark, by seeking *for that without*, which was only truly to be found within, that I advised him to keep his mind still and quiet, adding, that I believed the Almighty would one day

make himself known to him ; but he must not be surprised, if he should do it in such a way, as to all outward appearance, would in his view be contemptible. A few weeks after this, two female Friends, Ann Christy and Deborah Moline, having a concern to visit the families of Friends who attended Westminster meeting ; and as he had been a pretty constant attendant, and he was desirous of setting with the friends, his name was set down with two others ; and I requested the friends to let me sit with them. Very soon after we were seated, divine goodness was pleased to overshadow this little assembly, I mean the silent part of it.

The poor object of this little narrative in a few minutes burst into tears, and continued in this humble state for nearly twenty minutes before a word was uttered ; when one of the females (A. C.) unlettered and unlearned as to human attainments ; but who had waited for Christ to be her instructor ; in a few words expressed herself to this effect ; that she had felt an extraordinary solemnity on her first sitting down, which had continued to the present time, so much so, that she feared to speak, although she feared to keep silence, more especially as the subject which had come before her, was of a

truly awful and solemn nature. Surely, she added, there is no person present, who has any doubts respecting the existence of a Supreme Being. If there is, I would have such look into their own hearts, and observe the secret operations of a *something* there they cannot but feel, more especially when they have committed an evil action ; how does it torment the poor mind, and render it for a time in continual uneasiness. On the other hand, when they have acted well ; have avoided the temptations to evil, what a sweet glow of approbation has covered the mind.— From whence proceed this uneasiness or this approbation? It must proceed from something. Man could not communicate these sensations to himself. Be assured they come from God. Nay it is God himself who thus speaks in the inmost of the heart. The friend said but little more ; to the person it was addressed to, it was a volume ; it was to him as though the windows of Heaven were opened. To myself, it was an opportunity never to be forgotten.

About two days from the above period, my friend called on me in the evening, and requested to have some conversation with me, and which I readily agreed to. Without any preface he told me that he knew not how

he could be sufficiently grateful to me for the patience I had endured with him ; or for the kind concern I had invariably manifested for his welfare, but he added, “ I believe it will give you inconceivable pleasure to be informed, that I have now not a doubt remaining. I am abundantly thankful to that Almighty Being, who in mercy has made himself known to this poor benighted heart of mine, in some degree through the instrumentality of that dear woman, though I may acknowledge to you, that before a word was spoken, the business was nearly effected. I had taken great pains, as you know, to invalidate the scripture testimony ; but at that solemn and heavenly opportunity, all the arguments I had made use of for this purpose, reverted back, and I became confounded and ashamed. I felt as it were all at once, the certain evidence of a kind and merciful God ; which so overcame me, that I could only show my love and gratitude, by my tears, so that for a while I appeared to myself in Heaven ; that is, in a situation of mind far beyond what any earthly mortal could bestow. The dear woman was doubtless sensible of my situation, and confirmed to me, the evidence I had felt in my own soul.

“ I this evening thought, that though I had

been thus favored, it would be difficult to point out or explain the Divinity of Christ, a thing which I then conceived as altogether absurd. But on coming up your steps, and waiting to speak to you, the whole mystery was unfolded with the greatest clearness and satisfaction to my own mind, and now I have no doubts on that subject."

He also entered on the subject of the creation of man, his fall, his complete redemption through Jesus Christ ; and other religious topics, in a way that struck me with astonishment, because his explanations though confirming, as to the evidence of these great and important truths, were conveyed in language very dissimilar to what has been usually written on these subjects. In short, it appears as if a ray of divine light and intelligence had been afforded him, as a certain confirming seal to the evidence he had felt of the being and of the power of God.

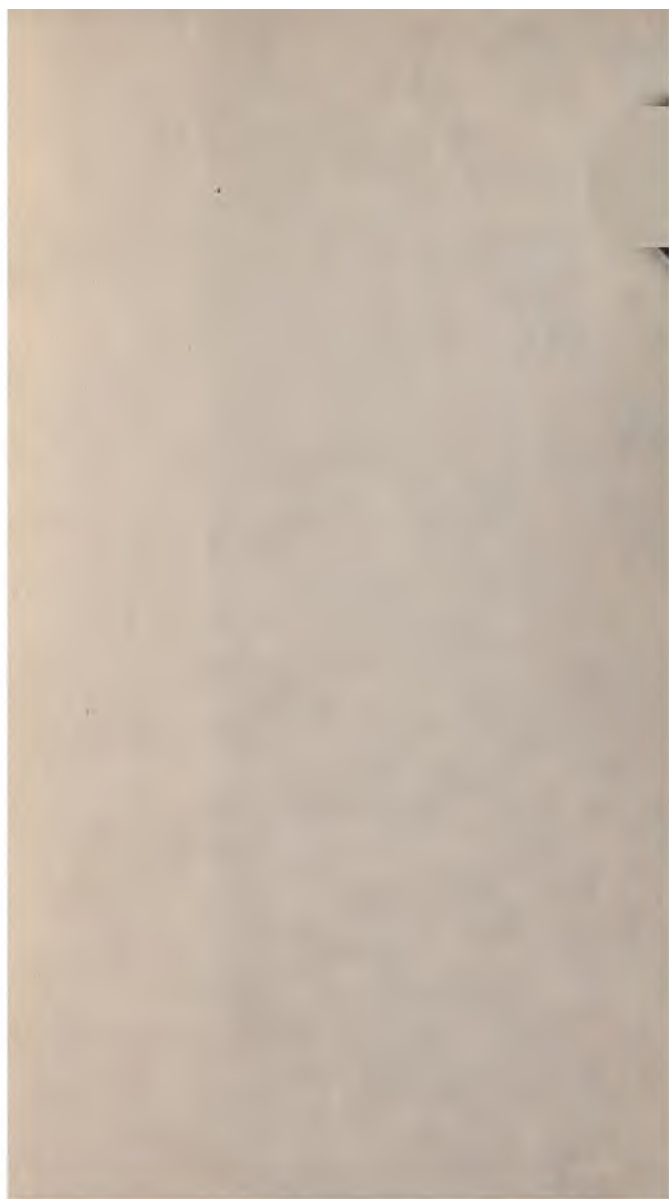
His very nature at this time, seemed altered, and his countenance seemed changed, as from the haughtiness, which his outward rank in society had given him, his disposition now became mild and passive, like a little child, joined to the simplicity and innocence of a lamb. Soon after this occurrence he called on me one morning, when during

the previous night there had been a dreadful storm, attended with violent thunder and lightning. He related his feelings at that time, which were very striking. He said, that previous to this storm, he had never known what the fear of death was; he had supposed it to be mere annihilation, and that both soul and body would be destroyed at the moment of death; the fear of which had never given him any concern; but now it was different; he saw his awful situation; that perhaps in an instant he should be in the presence of that Being he had contemned during his whole life.

His sins were ranged in order before him, and he felt all the horrors of self-condemnation and fear. In this situation he was led to pray fervently for forgiveness for the past, and preservation for the future. It was a new scene in the period of his life, the effect of which, words could not express. After his mind had been thus graciously visited and enlightened, his natural imperious temper would sometimes show itself, with sudden fits of passion; for this he was always penitent, and often expressed his sorrow. Perhaps this was permitted to convince him of the necessity of watchfulness, and that he should guard against too great

dependance on past experience, or too much confidence in his natural strength, and that in order to reap all the advantages, of so much divine favor, great humility and self-abasement would be necessary. It is but justice to him to say, he never showed any intemperate behavior towards me, he always treated me with the greatest respect. He had a sister in Germany, a Roman Catholic, married to a nobleman. He lamented his being obliged to return to Germany where he said he should be surrounded by Romish priests. Previous to his departure he requested some of Friends' writings ; acknowledging that he felt more satisfaction in reading them than any other. He attended Friends' Meetings regularly till he left England.

FREDERICK SMITH.



C 8347.970.75
The infidel reclaimed;
Widener Library

003145677



3 2044 081 824 047